

Remarks

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks and discussion.

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 10 are amended, and new Claims 11-15 are added.

In the Office Action Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,471,559 to Kashima, and Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kashima. The above amendments overcome the rejections of the claims for the following reasons.

With respect to independent Claims 1 and 10, the present invention is directed to an outboard motor having a surge tank disposed on a downstream side of a throttle body and adjacent the crankcase, and intake pipes connecting the surge tank and intake ports. It is asserted that Kashima does not disclose or render obvious these features, as Kashima does not depict or describe a surge tank.

For the above reasons, it is requested that the rejection of independent Claims 1 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 103(a) be withdrawn, and that independent Claims 1 and 10 be allowed.

Notwithstanding the above discussion, it is submitted that the claims recite further features that are not disclosed or rendered obvious by Kashima. By way of specific non-limiting examples, it is submitted that the claimed features in independent Claim 10 of a vapor separator disposed on a downstream side of a fuel injector unit, with both the vapor separator and the fuel injector unit disposed between a side wall of an engine and an intake manifold, require allowance of the claim.

Specifically, it is submitted that disposing both the vapor separator and the fuel injector unit between the engine and the intake manifold is novel and unobvious, and is not a

matter of design choice. This arrangement of the vapor separator and the fuel injector unit requires that a space be provided between the engine and the intake manifold. Numerous technical considerations must be addressed to provide such a space. In this case, the claimed features including the throttle body disposed in front of the crankcase permit the vapor separator and the fuel injector unit to be disposed between the engine and the intake manifold.

In contrast, it is submitted that in Kashima in order to dispose a vapor separator downstream of a fuel injector unit, with both the vapor separator and the fuel injector unit disposed between an intake manifold and an engine, a great increase in a width of the outboard motor of Kashima would be required. Thus, Kashima cannot provide the advantages provided by the present invention, including the relatively smaller size of the claimed engine.

The foregoing provides alternate grounds for the allowance of independent Claim 10.

New Claim 11-15 recite features that are not taught or suggested by Kashima. By way of specific non-limiting example, Claim 11 recites the claimed features of an air inlet of an intake duct disposed above a lowermost intake pipe on an intake manifold. By this arrangement, the air inlet of the intake duct can be disposed in a space formed between an intake manifold and an engine, the space being provided by disposing a throttle body in a vicinity of a crankcase. When the air inlet is disposed in this space above the lowermost intake pipe of the intake manifold, the influence of heat produced by the engine on the intake manifold is decreased, since the air warmed by the engine heat is taken into the air inlet. As a result, the power efficiency of the claimed outboard motor is increased. These advantages are not provided by the outboard motor of Kashima.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in

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condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-15 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

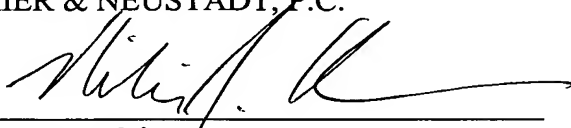
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Respectfully submitted,

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